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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MAPUTO 001182

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SUBJECT: GRM'S RECENT MOVES ON ZIMBABWE

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Todd C. Chapman, Reasons 1.5(b+d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Carlos Simango, a close advisor to Mozambican President Armando Guebuza told the Charge on 11/27 that the Secretary General of the ruling FRELIMO party met in South Africa with leaders of other liberation movements in the region to press ZANU-PF to accept MDC control--with ZANU-PF sharing power--of Zimbabwe's Interior Ministry. He said that SADC leaders feel that a sudden exit from power by Mugabe could destabilize Zimbabwe further, and that Guebuza believes MDC's Morgan Tsvangarai is afraid to take on the Prime Minister slot. Separately, another contact told the Charge that the GRM is furious with Graca Machel's work with Jimmy Carter and Kofi Annan, which is seen as undermining the GRM's efforts. Simango said that Guebuza feels the only USG message he hears now is that Mugabe must go, and suggested that the Charge meet with Guebuza next week to discuss ways the USG can help. Should this meeting be scheduled, specific talking points from Washington will be requested. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) Carlos Simango, a close advisor to President Guebuza, called on Thanksgiving Day morning and asked to see the Charge with a certain urgency. Simango went to the Charge's home to provide an update on the latest developments in SADC efforts to resolve the political impasse in Zimbabwe.

Veterans of Regional Liberation Movements Meet

¶3. (C) He reported that the Secretary General of the FRELIMO Party, Felipe Paunde, was sent by Guebuza to meet in South Africa with senior party officials from the ANC, ZANU-PF, and MPLN on Tuesday, November 25. Other participants included "regional veterans of the liberation movements" who have known Mugabe for a long time. There Paunde was instructed to press the ZANU-PF leaders on the importance of getting Mugabe to relinquish control of the Interior Ministry so as not to scuttle the tentative power-sharing agreement with MDC. The SADC summit proposal for the two sides to share leadership of the Ministry, Paunde argued, could be achieved in many ways, including an MDC representative as minister but a ZANU-PF representative as the commander of the police, or some other variation. When the Charge asked about the presence of government officials at the meeting, Simango replied, "Remember that it is the political parties, and not necessarily the governments, that run regional affairs." The Charge asked what the conclusions of the meeting were. Simango said that all agreed, including the senior ZANU-PF leaders, that Mugabe must allow the MDC to lead the interior ministry in order to ease the political tensions and to allow increased humanitarian assistance to flow into Zimbabwe. Simango again claimed that the (unidentified) ZANU-PF representatives at this meeting agreed with the conclusions.

Concern that Mugabe's Sudden Exit Could Worsen Conflict

¶ 14. (C) When asked if the humanitarian argument would have any influence on Mugabe, Simango said, "No, for him it has nothing to do with the people of Zimbabwe-it is all about power. We understand that." He continued that Guebuza and other regional leaders clearly comprehend that Mugabe must be removed from power in Zimbabwe, but believe that his immediate and abrupt departure would unleash political forces that would plunge the country into further chaos and violence. Therefore, a period, however awkward, in sharing power was important to give the political scenario time to be redrawn.

Guebuza Doubts Tsvangarai Ready for Power

¶ 15. (C) Simango said that Guebuza believed that Tsvangarai was actually scared to assume the position of Prime Minister. Simango reported that in Guebuza's meeting with Tsvangarai in Harare a few weeks ago, Tsvangarai spent much of the time upon his need for a diplomatic passport rather than a regular passport. Guebueza told Tsvangarai that as Prime Minister, he certainly would get a diplomatic passport, but that he had to become the Prime Minister first. As the discussion became a circular one, Guebueza concluded that Tsvangarai was afraid and not really sure what he wanted. Simango also said that Guebuza was increasingly frustrated with the South African government, which had not handled its own transition well and was not really supporting Mbeki's ongoing mediation role.

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GRM Furious with Graca Machel's "Grandstanding"

¶ 16. (C) Separately from this meeting with Simango, another well-connected source reported on November 26 to the Charge that the GRM was furious with Graca Machel for "grandstanding" with Kofi Annan and Jimmy Carter in South Africa. The source noted that as a senior FRELIMO leader, she was undermining the diplomatic work of not only SADC in general, but that of President Guebuza specifically.

COMMENT/ACTION: Guebuza Wants to Discuss U.S. Help in Zim

¶ 17. (C) The Charge again reiterated that the United States would like to be helpful in reaching a solution in Zimbabwe. Simango said that Guebuza is concerned that the only message he is hearing from the USG is that "Mugabe must go now," and that this was not the SADC view, nor did leaders believe that this would promote regional stability. Mozambique, through Guebuza and Foreign Minister Oldemiro Baloi, remains actively engaged in seeking solutions in Zimbabwe. As the Mozambicans tell it, Guebuza is perhaps the only head of state who, given their decades long relationship, can still speak directly with Mugabe. Simango suggested that the Charge meet with Guebuza in the coming week to discuss concrete ways in which the United States could be helpful in Zimbabwe. Should this meeting be scheduled, specific talking points from Washington will be requested.
Chapman